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ABSTRACT

This yearbook describes the program undertaken by the Montebello, California Unified School District to assist children's development in the area of language arts by giving them the opportunity to use cameras to record their visual experience and by then using the resulting pictures, slides and films as the basis of language arts experiences. It explains the logic underlying the program by showing that by so doing children, particularly those who are not yet engaged in learning, begin to discriminate and interpret the visual actions, objects and symbols they encounter in their own environments and thereby acquire an intrinsic, self-oriented motivation to develop the creative language arts competencies needed to comprehend and enjoy these experiences and to communicate them to others. Brief accounts of 17 specific visual learning experiences are included, along with many representative samples of the pictures taken by the students themselves. A short selected bibliography is listed at the conclusion of the report. (PB)

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VISUAL LITERACY YEARBOOK

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AN ESEA TITLE I PUBLICATION

MONTEBELLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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VISUAL LITERACY IS...

A multi-defined term for one thing. But perhaps that ambiguity mitigates in favor of creativity. For example, several years ago when the first conference on Visual Literacy was held in Chicago, it was attended by film makers, social activists, educators, ophthalmologists, artists. Each year thereafter the yearly conference has been attended by the same diverse interests, each making visual literacy its own.

In Montebello, it became the tool of educators who would "take each child where he is," who would use the child's language and experiences as the basis for language arts by putting a camera in his hands. Attempting to seize upon intrinsic motivation of "self" as the means for involving kids not yet engaged in learning gave visual literacy its meaning.

So much of what we presently offer children is adult logic, with adult notions of relevance reflecting adult concerns and not always responsive to the multi-cultures of ethnic background, age and socio-economic status of children. What would happen if children were given cameras and asked to build their own learning materials?

If the child can "invent" himself, would we not have a "high-interest" piece of material out of which we could build a variety of languaging experiences? If we recognize the child as important enough to be the basis out of which we build such experiences, will he not have a sense of personal power and self esteem?

What is to follow is the story of such an effort in the Montebello Unified School District...

Patricia Heffernan–Cabrera

VISUAL LITERACY

Comes to the Montebello Unified School District

I first heard about visual literacy at an ASCD conference in the fall of 1970. I signed up for a two-day workshop simply because I had never heard the term.

After an intensive eye-opening (literally and educationally) I returned home determined to find some teachers to work with so that I could learn more about this exciting approach to learning.

Charles Post encouraged me to submit a modest proposal for ESEA Title I funds and by March 1971 we were ready to launch a project with 33 volunteer teachers, aides and resource teachers from Bell Gardens, Montebello Gardens, Suva and Winter Gardens schools.

We learned that Jack Debes of Syracuse University was coming to Santa Barbara for a conference so we invited him to Montebello to launch our project. He is the man who wove strands from language arts, graphic arts, linguistics, psychology, philosophy and general semantics to formulate an approach to creating visually literate people. He sent us off to a great start.

Mr. Debes recommended that we invite Patricia Heffernan-Cabrera of the USC Teacher Corps staff to work along with us. Our project owes its major stimulation to Pat. As teachers and students (aged 4-12) began to explore uses of the camera to develop visual literacy, she evaluated, encouraged and stretched our efforts.

During 1971-72 we continued to meet. Several teachers and aides contributed to *Visuals Are a Language*, an Eastman Kodak publication. Bruce Matsui discussed math possibilities via camera with Dr. Arline Roster of Cal State Long Beach. Etta Wasser wrote our first description of a project with cameras in the hands of children. Chyrl Villa and Bruce Matsui presented their projects at a conference of the Association of Teacher Educators of California held at USC. Irma Coulter developed her report to the Los Angeles County Assessment of Young Children Project in visual format.

Contributors to this publication, who are in Title I, Title VII and "no title" schools, consider themselves beginners. They are to be congratulated on their willingness to share their initial efforts. We all hope that they will continue to experiment and share their experiences, and that others will join them.

As Jack Debes said to us, "A visually literate person can discriminate and interpret the visual actions, objects and symbols that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication."

Lois Williams
Inservice Education Consultant

Student Involvement in Slide-Tape Production

OBJECTIVE — The student will be able to maintain a perfect safety record at school for one school year after seeing the slide-tape presentation.

This slide-tape production was done to help students at Rosewood Park School reduce the number of preventable accidents which are common at every school. The students themselves were the actors seen in the slides which showed some of the following:

1	Walking down the arcade away from the wall not far enough to prevent an outward swinging classroom door from striking the walkers.
2	Jumping from a moving swing at the highest point of its arc.
3	Running barefoot on the playground, thereby risking injury from stones, glass, nails, and other sharp objects.
4	Sitting on a chair and leaning back on one or two legs in an unbalanced position.
5	Using a chair as a stepladder in the classroom, not making sure the user always places the chair back against the wall, or whatever object is being climbed.

The tape narration was written and recorded by the teacher; however, it was written in a "Cognitive Conflict" style. That is, several scenes showing unsafe actions were used leaving the student time to verbalize the correct behavior. Then the same action was shown demonstrating the correct behavior.

The slide-tape show has been shown to children in grades 1 - 5 with good reaction and, consequently, the demonstration by the children of an awareness not previously noted.

Follow-up activities, such as posters depicting actual scenes from the presentation, additional areas of potential hazards, discussion, role playing, and occasional re-showing of the slides and tape, give considerable reinforement.

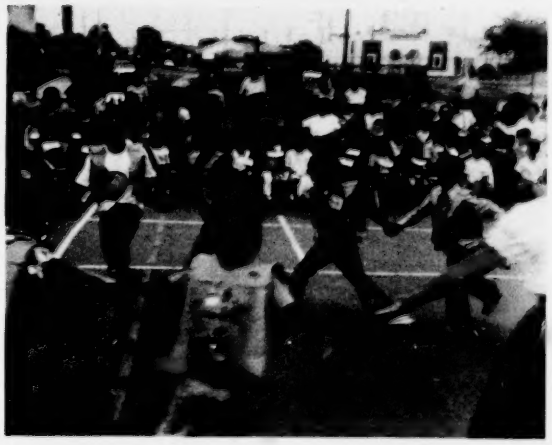
Robert A. Moore
Rosewood Park

Recording Our History

Our cameras provided us a new way to keep track of special events. The first was the September 16 fiesta.

I also took many spontaneous surprise shots of children working and playing. These provided rich materials for language-experience stories.

Nosotros recordamos que bailamos La Babma y La Raspa a nuestra fiesta el 16 de Septiembre.



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Nuestros papas nos accompanaron lo mismo que nuestras familias.

Yolanda Lostettler

Pictures for Language Development

I took a picture of a car. It is brown and white.

AGUSTINE

This was our second project with our cameras. We went for a walk, and each child selected the subject for the picture he wanted to take. Later, he told me his story.

These children were all Spanish-dominant and just beginning to express themselves in English. We used the same plan during our trip to the Los Angeles Zoo.

We went for a walk. I took a picture of Mike holding a paper.

MIGUEL

(NEXT PAGE)

Bobbie Mills
Montebello Park

I went across the street and took a picture of the sign. There is a park with trees and bushes.
NACHO

Michael is playing tether ball. The tether ball is on the playground.
ROSA

Going for a Walk

Omar saw a lady-bug. It flew in the bushes. Omar was looking for it. He did not find it again.

EDWARD DURAN

Virginia Whittemore
Montebello Park

This was my first effort to develop a book with photo illustrations. I went for a walk with five Spanish-dominant children who were preparing to read in English.

Each child selected the place he wanted me to "snap" him. The stories were typed in English and stapled into a simple but very popular book.

Later the children took their own pictures.

We went for a walk. I saw a pretty fence, so Mrs. Whittemore took my picture by it.

MARY LOU HERNANDEZ

Stories About You

I carried out a project which was designed so that each student would write about every other child.

First came a photograph of the child – a snapshot or the "official" school picture. Then the others were invited to write an original story about the child. The picture and the typed stories were then fastened to an attractive folder for everyone to read.

Most are highly imaginative. Grace's story titled SECRET LISA is in three chapters:

CHAPTER ONE: Secret Language

Once Lisa made a secret language. It was unusually funny. Flower meant mountain and mountain meant flower. Curious meant feather and feather meant curious.

GOOD GRIEF!!!!!!!!!! WHAT?????????

She shouted it out to the whole world!!! It wasn't a secret any more. Poor Lisa! She had to make another one.

CHAPTER TWO: Lisa in Germany

Then Lisa went to Germany. Her mother lives there. Lisa cried and cried until her mother called her a cry baby. Then she stopped. But her secret wasn't secret and Lisa started crying again. She forgot English and when she went back to America she had a new secret language – German. Now she is happy again.

CHAPTER THREE: Lisa's Home Town

Lisa went back to her home town. She met her old friends. "Oh!" she said. "Sue is German and my new secret language won't be a secret to her." Then she had an idea!! "It will be a secret between both of us," she said.

The bad news. She forgot German. But she learned it again.

THE
HAPPY
END

Some of the stories are factual. For example, Debbie writes about Lisa:

Lisa is in my classroom. She writes very good too. Her family is nice. I can tell that her family is nice from the way Lisa acts. Lisa knows things I don't know. I told Lisa a secret. It was a good one too. I like her a lot. So does Dora, her best friend, and April, her second best friend.

Debbie writes about Jimmy:

Sometimes Jimmy is smart and sometimes he is dumb. But he draws very good dogs and cats. On Easter he ate too much candy and got sick. I didn't get sick.

Children all wondered what others would write and were eager to read the stories as they were written. A whole collection of stories about YOU is a wonderful gift. The photographs helped the authors think about the children one at a time.

Mary Ann Tkacik
Bell Gardens

My Own Self Image

Some children have a hard time seeing adults as anything besides teachers, aides, etc. In an effort to "introduce" myself as a person, I made a book about myself. Friends took pictures of me at school and at home, I wrote captions and made a simple book for our classroom library.

The captions describe the pictures and also some of my beliefs:

Men and women of all ages have much to share.
Grown-ups can help children.
I think school is fun. I like to learn, too!
We all study together.
My friends have fun playing with me.
I share my abilities with friends.
I enjoy talking and eating with my friends.
I cook for my family and friends.
We are proud when we do something well.
We are all unique and valued for our differences.

Gloria Fernandez
Winter Gardens

Suva Visual Literacy **PROJECTS** *1971-72*

PROJECT I

Kathy Bagdanov, Virginia Shehorn, Dorothy Tamburo and Janet Torncello (8-9-year-olds, Polaroid camera)

Groups of five to seven children were taken from class to take pictures of their choice. The next day each wrote about his picture and placed it and his story in the class album. The album was shared by all children in the team.

PROJECT II

Vi Osborne, School-Community Counselor (Polaroid camera)

During the year Vi Osborne did small group counseling with fifth and sixth grade girls who were recommended by their teachers for this activity. Each girl needed help in assuming positive roles in groups and in assessing her personal worth.

Each group had a "portrait" taken, after which the girls named the group as a whole and then described each other as individuals. The pictures became a talking base and an element in unifying the groups.

PROJECT III

Mitzi Cholewinski (7-8-year-olds, Polaroid camera)

Children who were slow readers took pictures which were used in language-experience books. Each child also had his picture taken doing whatever he liked doing best at school. Stories and pictures were shared with the entire team.

PROJECT IV

Marilyn Petruzzi and Kathy Valentine (6-7-year-olds, Instamatic cameras)

The group took two cameras on a field trip to the zoo. The children chose the animals, the teachers took the pictures. The pictures were used in their science unit on vertebrates to classify animals, describe environments, compare physical characteristics, etc.

PROJECT V

Kathi Follette (7-8-year-olds, Instamatic camera)

Children in the "low" reading group took pictures of objects that interested them. They then used the pictures to develop a core of descriptive words.

PROJECT VI

Fran Hunt (8-9-year olds, Instamatic camera)

"Room 24's Book of Nice People" has two pages for each child. First is a close-up camera portrait in color with a story which a small group of friends has written. Then comes his self-portrait in crayon and a story he wrote about himself. For example, his friends write of Richard, "Richard is a good little guy. Richard has a girl friend. He is a good friend of ours. We like Richard."

Of himself, he says, "I am a nice boy. I help people. I like onions because they are good but I don't like beefaroni. I like to play handball and basketball. I am a good sport."

Maggie Hangartner

A Child Study Project

I am a participant in the Los Angeles County Assessment of Young Children Project. An attempt is being made to discover what the young child of today is really like. I chose at random a boy and a girl for the study, as we were directed. The camera became an additional tool for assessing these children, limited to three areas: self-image, relationship with peers and awareness of immediate environment.

Each child was asked what pictures he would like to take, using the camera himself. The choices were made and in most cases the plans were made by the child. After the pictures were printed there was an opportunity to verbalize, looking at the pictures. All of this material was recorded and put into book form to become the property of the child.

Following this I searched the anecdotal records of the two children for additional material in the areas mentioned above. The material which follows relates to only two of the eight pictures taken by the girl in the project. She is six years, seven months old, with a Spanish surname.

PICTURE NO. 1
Herself (her own story)

Look at all the cracks in the sidewalk.
There's too much leaves.
All four pictures have leaves.
Some came out middle-sized and some came out little and some came out big.
That dress is really a different color of red.
The bow on my hair is like that though.

PICTURE NO. 2
Two Friends

The paint's dripping down on the easel.
T. was reading L. the book, then L. would know how to read.
T. is looking at Janet and Mark.
The leaves are getting green.
I took their picture because they play with me on the playground.
They almost have the same boots.

FROM MY ANECDOTAL RECORD:

SELF-IMAGE — *Twenty times in the record she says, "Oh, I can do that, that's cinchy," or some similar remark, but she did not say anything about herself as a person as she looked at her pictures. I think I would hypothesize that a six-year-old is unable, unwilling or too self-conscious to verbalize the feeling which may be there.*

PEER RELATIONSHIP — *D. talks about playing with or is observed playing with the two girls mentioned in her story six times. In the room she has chosen to sit beside the same girl all year. The record shows numerous times when she praises another's work or drawings.*

AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENT. *D.'s stories as well as her record show her interest in the world around her and an ability to verbalize concerning her environment. The pictures served very well in discovering her interest in detail, color and her accurate observation, for example, of the shade of red of her dress.*

(NEXT PAGE)

A
CHILD
STUDY
PROJECT
(continued)

D.'s behavior as she looked at the first picture of herself also supports the idea that it is difficult to talk about one's own picture. She first giggled and said m-m-m-m, looked silently for 30 seconds and then started to talk about the crack in the sidewalk. At the end she talked about the color of her dress, finally getting to something more personal. It would be interesting to take another set of pictures at a later date to see whether the pattern changes.

Irma Coulter
Bell Gardens

Tracie's First Picture

Tracie exploring the camera and its parts:

TRACIE: *"What's this, Chyrl?"*

CHYRL: *"That's the button you press when you're ready to take the picture."*

Tracie has chosen her subject and the setting for her first photo. My aide is near her to help her balance the camera, if necessary. Actually, Tracie showed amazing skill in manipulating the camera. She was very independent and assertive in her choice-making in all of her camera work.

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Tracie is walking around the yard locating people and objects through the view-finder.

CHYRL: *"Tracie, tell me all you can see through the camera's eye."*
TRACIE: *"I see you and Marc and the swings and the fence and some houses over there."*
JOEY (Standing to Tracie's left): *"Do I get to take a picture?"*
TRACIE: *"No, Joey . . . just me right now."*

Tracie's actual photo taken with the Polaroid camera.

TRACIE IS FOUR.
CHYRL IS THE TEACHER.

Pollution on Film

Collecting evidence of pollution with a camera

We carried out a number of camera projects, but the most effective was our study of pollution. First on the school grounds and then in the neighborhood we recorded signs of pollution.

This led to an extensive all-school project to make the grounds safer and more attractive. It also made students appreciate efforts of families to keep their yards clean and attractive.

Here is one story from our book about pollution: "Pollution kills wildlife and humans. Pollution makes our city ugly and crummy.

"We have been painting trash cans and trying to clean up our school. It really looks better now. We have these pictures to show before and after.

"When we went to clean up our field we found a ditch full of garbage. We're going to find out how we can get permission from the city to clean up the ditch."

A family clean-up project

Joe McNichols
Montebello Gardens

Around The School

Committees were organized and each was asked to agree on one picture to take, anywhere on the school grounds.

The pictures and written descriptions were made into a uniquely decorated book for the class library.

I took a picture of the mobiles in the room and wrote a story congratulating the children for their ingenuity in making and hanging the mobiles.

The only disappointment came to the committee which waited in vain to get a good shot of the birds flying over the playground.

Titles of the pictures and stories:

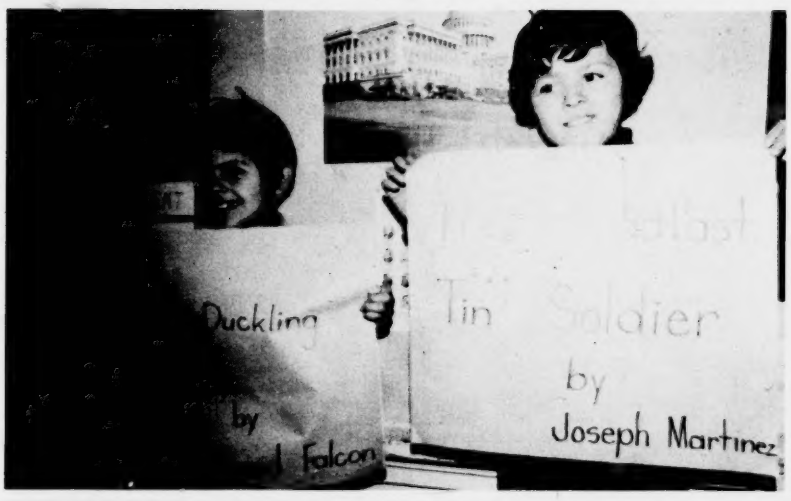
Our School
Planting Flowers
Miss Powell
Pollution
The Helpful Room
Mr. Todd and Our Trophy
Our Puppet Theater
Wilbert Can Read
Geometric Mobiles
The Bird Who Flew

I found that the nine and ten year olds eventually began to tire of the still cameras. I believe they were ready to tackle film making.

Jean Rothaermel
Bell Gardens

A New Venture

Writing has been stimulated by individual title pages. Class books of stories and Haiku are favorites, especially when they include creative illustrations. They really tried to write beautifully so that others would enjoy their work.



One way our primary team worked to develop self-esteem was our King/Queen for the Day project. Each day a name was drawn. Everyone in the class either wrote a letter or drew a picture saying at least one nice thing about the child. The King or Queen also served as room host for the day, selected a record to play, was captain at game time, etc. At the end of the day they gathered their letters and pictures to take home and received a "Happy Face" pin to remind them of a special happy day.

This has been a very exciting venture. It is the first time in my life I have ever taken pictures! Until now, my husband is the one in the family to do this.

However, the eagerness of the children makes me feel that this is a very good project. Even the last day of school, children from other rooms came in saying, "Why did you take them down?"

My major goal was to increase the self-esteem of each child, using snapshots and slides along with many other materials and methods.

The cameras also gave us a record of special people and events. We took colored slides on all our field trips. We also kept a pictorial record of the steps in building our new school. This made a wonderful "program" for the fifty parents who attended our open house. They were

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really delighted to see so many beautiful pictures of their children.

We also have a panel of pictures on display at all times. These change often and the children never tire of looking at them. They have inspired a number of original stories.

The children enjoy using photographic equipment. It seems to help give a great sense of self-pride in their own achievements.

Our cafeteria manager knows all of the children by name. This makes them feel good. Tony said, "Please take a picture of me!"

Each month finds a new audio visual chairman in charge of setting up and operating equipment.

Math becomes both fun and meaningful when we have many manipulative materials.

Our "Helping Hands" project encouraged the children to help each other at school and their families at home.

Fran Young
Winter Gardens

The Camera in an ESL Program

At the first Visual Literacy Workshop I was quite dubious as to how I could fit this into a program teaching five-year-old kindergarten children who spoke no English. My mind was really running ahead of itself with ideas of things I could do with older children, but with five-year-olds who spoke no English at all – what could I hope to accomplish! However, I felt it was worth a try so I put an inexpensive Instamatic camera in each child's hands, showed him what to look for and where to press down, and then I waited impatiently for the prints to come back.

When I opened the envelope I really got excited. The pictures were beautiful! I could hardly believe that five-year-olds, who had never held a camera before, took such good pictures. Not one was blurry, all were centered, all were great! And the children reacted with such enthusiasm and excitement! They talked about their pictures for days. Then they dictated stories, made their very own booklets with the pictures they chose to photograph, and took these books home to share with their family and friends.

After this initial experience, I have expanded the "Visual Literacy Program" to include movies, slides, Polaroid pictures, etc.; and am keeping my eyes and ears open for more suggestions.

I.		*Children take pictures of each other.*
	a.	Image building – each child has a picture of himself that he can take home to share with his family and friends.
OBJECTIVES	b.	Motivates language development – child talks about his picture with his classmates, teacher, and friends.
	c.	Child feels success – he realizes he can handle a camera and get good results.
II.		*Children take pictures of anything they choose to photograph in their room, the school, the playground, their home, neighborhood, etc.*
	a.	Motivates language development: the picture is his own choice so he is especially excited when he talks about it.
OBJECTIVES	b.	They dictate stories and take them home to share with their family and friends.
	c.	Image building – he feels good about being able to do something successfully.
III.		*Polaroid pictures of what we do within our groups, special events in classrooms, or on the playground.*
	a.	Motives language development.
	1.	Children discuss pictures among themselves.
OBJECTIVES	2.	They dictate stories and make booklets to take home to share with family and friends.
	b.	Polaroid pictures can be used with overhead projector to explain E.S.L. program to interested community groups.

(NEXT PAGE)

IV.		*Slides to show to children, parents, and interested community organizations.*
	a.	Slides of the various activities in our E.S.L. program.
	b.	Teacher aides working with E.S.L. children.
	c.	Volunteers working with E.S.L. children.
	d.	High School tutors working with E.S.L. children.
	e.	Showing progress in construction of new building.
OBJECTIVES	1.	Explaining the E.S.L. program to parents and community organizations.
	2.	Motivates conversation among the children concerning themselves and the program.
	3.	Image building – child sees himself projected on screen and can talk about it with his peers.

V.		*We make movies.*
	a.	Children's activities in our program.
	b.	Their activities with their own class on the playground (hula-hoops, jumping, P.E., etc.)
	c.	Other children on the playground – running, jumping, clowning, playing basketball, etc.
	d.	Our new building being constructed; men, trucks, equipment, and cranes at work.
	e.	Halloween parade; children, teachers, parents.
	f.	Teachers, secretary, principal, custodian, aides, volunteers, etc.
	g.	Children dramatize stories of their choice.
	h.	The children make up the script and act out the story to be filmed.
	1.	Motivates language development – interest and excitement are high when the children discuss the "action" in the movies with their classmates, their parents, and friends.
OBJECTIVES	2.	Image building – child sees himself projected on screen and his peers discuss with him what he is doing.
	3.	Creativity – children write their own scripts.
	4.	Poise – uninhibited "acting out" of their stories.
	5.	Great for Public Relations – we invite the parents to school to see movies of their children, their school, teachers, etc.

Etta Wasser
Winter Gardens

Capturing Geometric Forms in the Environment

Jean Piaget has demonstrated that young children need to learn mathematical concepts initially through concrete forms. In many instances, abstract mathematical concepts cannot be internalized by young children until they reach a later stage of development.

For example, *number* as a concept is not internalized until a child is capable of conserving quantity in its continuous and dis-continuous forms.

Geometric configurations represent another case in point. To the 6-7-8-year-olds with whom my two team colleagues and I work, the geometric symbols for a square, circle, rectangle and triangle have little meaning once they are removed from their workbooks. Children can and do recognize the primary shapes in the context of a page or on the blackboard.

Consequently, the camera affords the teacher with a wonderful tool for discovering concrete geometric forms. We gave each small group a camera and asked them to take pictures of geometric shapes. The camera served as the recording device for the children's discoveries. Later the pictures were used for discussion, clarification, material to write about, and a basis for art work.

In other words, the pictures were used to integrate a variety of rich experiences. In math I found them especially useful to illustrate the

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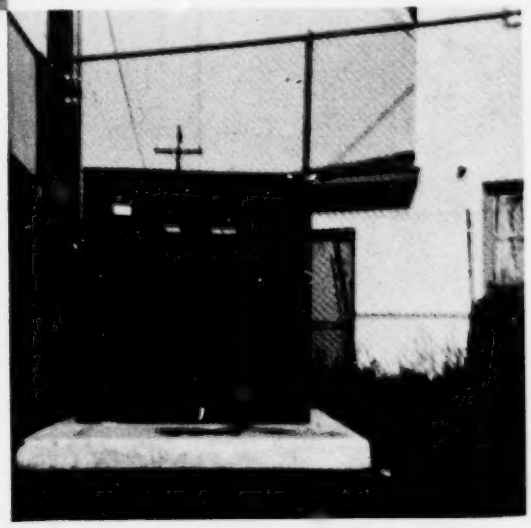
importance of the concept of open and closed curves. With closed figures showing their integral part of good structure, and cracks or fissures in a building as open figures, I could demonstrate concretely the importance of the closed versus open figure.

Thus the camera enables the child to record his discoveries and affords the teacher a way to stimulate interesting and integrating subject matter.



Bruce Matsui
Winter Gardens

Eyes of the Camera, Eyes of the Mind

During the 1971 MUSD-UCLA Summer Workshop I heard Patricia Heffernan-Cabrera describe some visual literacy projects which would help a child to think critically. I was especially interested in the possibilities for making part-whole relationships and discovering analogous relationships. What an exciting way to gain insights into a child's thinking as he progressed from concrete to abstract concepts!

That September I joined two teachers as a team to work with a non-graded group from 9-12 year olds. Eloise Baeza, NYC aide, was helpful at every stage of our experiments.

POT

Lifeless, beautiful, gray
Sitting in a garden
No feelings to feel gay
So lifeless yet beautiful

Bleak, bright, sitting
Stooping atop its mount
Flowered neatly
Bleak and bright

Imaginary, wonderful
Fairy-like look
Blurry bleak
Pot reflecting

STEFI

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BENCH
A bench sitting by a tree
Sees people and helps them rest.
People laugh and talk to old friends all day
And sometimes cry.
LORI LANTINI

Some children brought cameras from home and we borrowed a few more. After being sure that everyone knew how to operate a camera, we developed the idea of visual records. The children pretended that they were photographers for a magazine with a follow-up news story assignment. Ten "senior reporters" were selected at random to be responsible for the cameras and to teach the others in the group how to focus, time, etc.

Evaluation of the field trip pictures revealed a great variety of interests and need for more technical skills.

Soon we were ready to move into a major project of inquiry. Each child was asked to carefully select an object and photograph it from three distances. He would then react to his visual record through written statements about how he thought and felt as he viewed the pictures. I was assuming that this bombardment of one object would create reactions in prose or poetry which would help him discover how he thought. I also hoped that his thinking would progress from concrete to abstract concepts.

The writing was fascinating. In writing about the first picture (a close-up) the children reacted with concrete details or stayed with conventional thoughts. But as they progressed to the other two shots, they wrote with deeper perception and more individualized and original thoughts. The camera unfolded latent skills of self-expression for many children. The process of inductive reasoning was operating.

The pictures and writing were made into a large display, "Eyes of the Camera, Eyes of the Mind – Concrete to Abstract." Eloise assisted with this and also with our "Word Analysis Balloon Workshop" with words printed with felt pens on bright balloons and pinned on two clotheslines – one for abstract and one for concrete words. As words and senses came alive, one child asked, "If we can touch it, is it concrete?

It was fun! But only a beginning to the new learnings through visual literacy.

COMMENTS

As I studied the writings from the first frame to the second and third, several characteristics emerged:

1. The first frame (closest to the object) produced more imitative writings. More spontaneous and original language came with the second and third frames.
2. Sound and color images become more vivid in the later frames.

3. Climactic and dramatic writing seems to emerge as the writer becomes more intent and involved.

Do the conditions of lighting make a difference? As you see more or less detail do you work for language to express your perception? Whatever the reasons, the mental involvement led to more abstract levels of writing.

COMPARE

Close up, you see one car
And a truck.
Both carry
But one does more –
The truck.

But from afar
You get a different view
Of a family of cars –
A family-like you!

PERRY RAY BAUGHMAN

Lenna O'Neill
La Merced

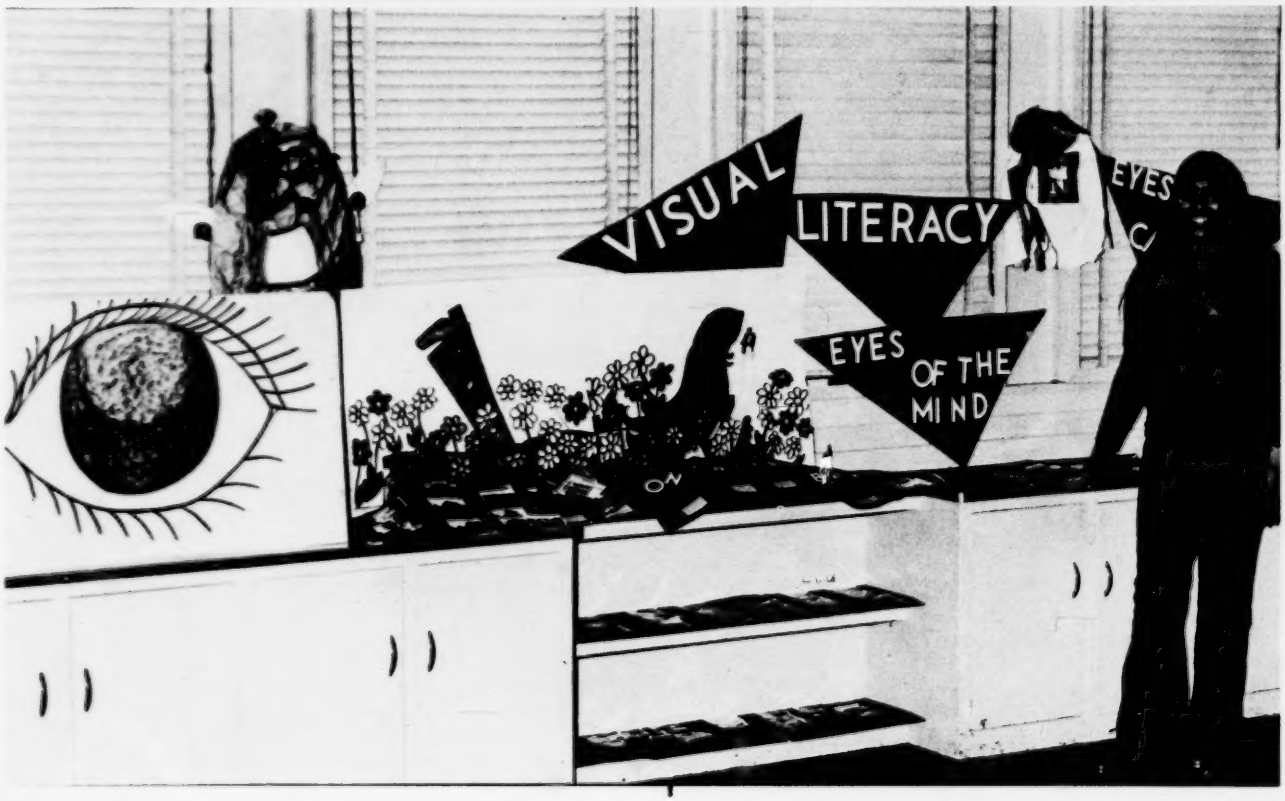
Eyes of the Camera, Eyes of the Mind

With an opportunity given to me through the NYC Program, I was fortunate to obtain a job working as a teachers' aide at La Merced Elementary School. I think of this as a fascinating experience, much more than a job. Observing, helping and working with these children was not only enjoyable, but I've learned a lot more about people than I ever knew before.

Getting involved in visual literacy at La Merced opened the eyes of the children to everything about them. We were involved with picture-taking of many activities the children enjoy. Not only were we interested in school activities, but in the home environments.

We constructed a large drawing of an eye and a camera. In order to tie our pictures into the display we cut a large strip of black paper to represent a filmstrip. This ran from the eye to the camera, with the children's pictures attached to it.

Many of the children in the team live in my neighborhood. Jonathan Machado and Marvin Tanaka helped me to picture the idea of "one photograph taken at three distances" – a new way for me to view objects of life!



Eloise Baeza
Montebello High School
(NYC Aide at La Merced)

When Young Children use Cameras

PREFACE

I am presently involved in Project Head Start, which includes 3-4-5-year-olds. This year my colleague and I are experimenting with an "open classroom" environment. Our free-flowing, child centered atmosphere was very conducive to camera work with children. My work initially in this experiment involved four children using the Polaroid camera. My main concentration was with two children randomly selected as part of a Los Angeles County Assessment Project for Early Childhood Education, which attempted to gather current data on today's young child. As my camera work progressed, all of my children experimented with photography, the last exerimenters using the Instamatic camera.

WHAT I HOPED TO FIND OUT

1. Do 3-5-year-olds have the physical coordination sufficient to work with a camera?
2. How does the child feel about his school environment?
   a. What is important to his physical setting at school?
   b. Who is important and valued by the child in his social world?
   c. Will his photography stimulate new or changing social contacts and interactions?
3. What cognitive-conceptual development may come out of his photography work?
4. In what ways does his photography stimulate his language development?
5. Does photography enhance his self-image?

WHAT I DISCOVERED

1. With delightful surprise I learned that 4-and-5-year-olds can indeed be photographers! Their physical coordination and manipulation of the camera amazed me. After observing Tracie's ability without any aid from an adult, I regretted that I had not allowed all of my photographers more independence in handling the camera.

   A very effective method, I found, was to let the child hold the camera (without film), locate, ask questions about, and discuss all the parts of the camera. I then let him take the camera around our outside yard, or inside classroom, look at friends and objects through the view-finder, and talk about what he saw. The children delighted in this process, often spending 20-30 minutes looking at various objects. I told them that when they found someone or something very special, we would put the film in and they could take a picture of their chosen subject or setting.

   To my surprise, I discovered that although the Polaroid camera was larger and heavier to manipulate, the children handled it with more ease and skill than the smaller Instamatic camera. The view-finder in the Polaroid was slightly larger, allowing them to "feel more into" their pictures (my supposition). Also, the shutter (called the "red button" by the children) on the Polaroid was more reachable and visible. The greatest handicap in using the Instamatic was the waiting period for the development. It appears essential that small children experience an "immediate replay-reprint" feed-back provided by the Polaroid. This has more relevance and meaning in terms of their perceptual awareness of concepts dealing with space, form, time, content and comparisons of color, shape and size. Also, the excitement and suspense in-

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		volved in the 60 second developing time created fantastic motivation and stimulation for language, social interaction and group awareness and cohesiveness.
	2	It appears from the four subjects with whom I worked that their immediate school environment (our 2 classrooms and outside area) still holds their interest and attention. The larger school may appear unknown. Perhaps they feel no connection or attachment at this time with it. The outdoor equipment seemed to be more significant than our indoor activities.
	3	Young children's choices of "best friends" appear transitory and a "friend" may be chosen because of proximity. I noted new interactions occurred between boys and girls when doing our camera work. Contrary to my assumption, the children chose children of the opposite sex to work with and photograph.
WHAT I DISCOVERED (continued)	4	The children's photography and their response to it has been an invaluable tool in assessing where the children are in their conceptual development. It was readily obvious for me to see which children are "non-see-ers," or those who may be having perceptual distortions in such areas as space, size, shape, distance, figure-ground, etc. I feel the camera can be an invaluable tool in allowing children to experience and work with the above concepts as well as making discriminations and comparisons in color, size, form, etc. For the child who is inattentive, it allows a rewarding experience for focusing attention on selective asects of environment. Our photography provided an excellent take-off into problem solving activities, e.g. "Oh, we didn't get Patsy's feet in our picture? How can you move the camera to get all of her?", or "How can we move ourselves or the camera to get more in our picture?"
	5	There was no doubt of the increased use of new vocabulary in conversation. Children took delight in identifying objects, places and people in their photos. It stimulated lengthy discussions and some healthy disagreements. The use of the cassette tape recorder was an added complement to the photography. I could provide an immediate replay of their conversations with me or their peers.
	6	The obvious joy and delight on the children's faces indicated how very valuable photography is in enhancing self-image. "It came out! I took it!" "That's me and my friend." "Look everybody at my picture I took." Photography is a vital tool in self-discovery. As Tracie said, "There's fun to take pictures of people . . . laughing, crying and kissin'."
IDEAS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE PLANS	1	I would like to go into the children's homes and let them photograph the space and people important to them. If film and money permitted, it would be fun to leave a camera at home with the child and his parents to experiment with together. Then it would be fun to make a photograph album for each child – My School, My Home, My Family. . .
	2	From other nature walks we have taken, I'm aware of how un-seeing our children are of their natural environment. It would be fun to go with a small group of childen and let them take photos of nature – leaves, insects, puddles – that catch their natural interest and curiosity.
	3	To help develop a sense of belonging to a community, it would be fun to let them photograph important people in our town – shoe repair man, service station attendant, street workers, etc. We could make "An Important People Book."
	4	There are great possibilities in developing cognitive skills by using our photos. What about the *sequential concept* . . . "Take a photo of something that happens first, then later." Or *classifying* . . . "Let's put all photos of houses here; apartments here; trailers here." Or "Let's put all the photos of people *older* than you in this pile; *younger* than you in this pile."

Chyrl Villa
Bell Gardens

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